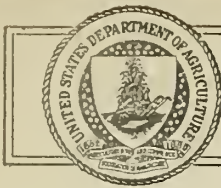
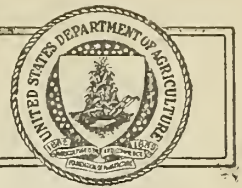


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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Information
Press Service



WASHINGTON, D. C.

RELEASE FOR PUBLICATION
JULY 7, 1937 (WEDNESDAY)

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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SELECT YOUR PEACHES
BY 'GROUND' COLOR

-- --

It's peach time again.

This down-skinned fruit in most parts of the United States started out this year under such auspicious circumstances that agricultural economists and fruit men looked forward to the largest crop since 1931--which was a great peach year.

In the 10 Southern States where the crop is now being harvested, however, freezes cut production to 28 percent below average. The result is that June forecasts for the nation as a whole were that the crop total would be slightly below the 5-year average--1928 to 1932.

Nevertheless the nation's market baskets will doubtless contain goodly supplies of peaches especially throughout July and August.

Some shoppers may need to be warned that the peach is the gay deceiver of the fruit world. It may wear a lovely red blush and yet be so immature that it never will ripen but will shrivel first.

On the other hand it may seem hard to pressure, yet be almost ready to be eaten, for some varieties ripen from the pit out. It's not the blush nor the lack of blush--nor the hardness--that tells the tale. It's the background color. After the green of the ground color starts to "break", as orchardists say--after the

And for the minimum-cost adequate diet, the recommendation is "one serving daily of fruit or an additional vegetable"--still supplementing the citrus fruit or tomatoes.

Naturally, not all fruits are equally valuable dietetically. Peaches, however, have significant virtues beyond their pleasing flavor. They are a good source of vitamin C and a fair source of vitamin B. And the yellow fleshed peaches are excellent sources also of vitamin A.

As to ways of serving peaches, it's hard to beat them raw, either with or without cream. And of course, that's the way to eat them to get the full benefit of their vitamin content.

But any cook likes some variety in her menus. So there are times when she scouts about for other ways of serving this fruit. That's the time to put some of it into raw peach pie or tarts, peach cobbler, dumplings or puddings. Peach fritters are greeted with enthusiasm in the average American family.

Then there are ice cream and sherbet. A little lemon juice--say a tablespoon to 2 or 3 cups of sliced peaches--gives character to an ice cream which might otherwise be a bit bland for general taste.

In salads, peaches combine nicely with other fresh fruits, nuts, cream cheese, dates and figs. Grind up some figs, dates, and nuts--moisten with cream or dressing and put a spoonful of the mixture in the center of your peach halves in their lettuce nest and you have a salad that is good to look at--still better to eat.

Another attractive salad is made by filling the center with a cottage cheese-nut mixture and then putting on the top a salad dressing into which has been mixed sieved raspberries. The green of the lettuce leaf, the pale yellow of the peach, and the violet of the raspberries in this combination would give a festive air to the simplest dinner.

In whatever role the peach appears, at its best it has a texture and flavor that commends it to all but the most jaded appetites.



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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WASHINGTON, D. C.

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JULY 14, 1937 (WEDNESDAY)

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THE MARKET BASKET
by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

SWEET CORN TO BE PLENTIFUL THIS SUMMER

Sweet corn--bushel baskets of it--fresh from the field, is now beginning to be seen in our markets. It is rapidly displacing its humbler predecessor, green field corn, usually called "roasting ears".

The average American so thoroughly enjoys corn-on-the-cob that when summer comes he'll attack the first of the crop with gusto--and a not too critical taste.

And that's just as well, for June's fresh corn is nothing more or less than early field corn, grown for roasting ears. So is that sold the first part of July, for that matter! Farmers in the southern-most states, as a matter of fact, plant no true sweet corn for the northern market--a fact which accounts for the 30-day lag between the first roasting ears and the first local sweet corn on American tables in the northern part of the country.

There's no deception about the business, as this earlier corn is frankly labeled "roasting ears" or "green corn". The big roasting ear shippers in descending order of their importance last summer were Alabama, Texas, and Florida. North Carolina, however, was the biggest July shipper. True sweet corn can hardly be said to enter at all into the commercial shipping picture.

From mid-July until fall the real sweet corn is available. By the first of August it will be at its height, and around mid-August it will likely be at its cheapest. Almost every state east of the Rockies habitually grows a generous local supply.

This summer's sweet corn promises well. Though the U. S. Department of Agriculture economists gather no figures on this crop, they are quite ready to say: "Conditions have been favorable for corn in general--naturally they are favorable for sweet corn."

Even though roasting ear production is on the wane and sweet corn is waxing, it may be worth while to summarize differences and similarities between the two.

Both sweet corn and roasting ears should be juicy and tender, with bright, plump, milky kernels just firm enough to offer slight resistance to pressure. But sweet corn should have an added sweetness.

If either type corn is too immature the kernels will be very small, soft, and flavorless. If it is too mature, the change from milky content to a doughy texture has begun and the kernels are tough. The range of time during which the corn is of excellent quality is somewhat longer with sweet corn than with field corn.

Color is no sure guide to corn type. There are yellow and white varieties among both, though the field corn sold for cooking is usually white. In some varieties the husks indicate corn type. Field corn husks are usually smooth. Sweet corn husks often end in small blades which hang free in ribbon like ends.

In many sections of the country there is a preference for big ears. But big ears are not characteristic of sweet corn, which runs usually from 7 to 9 inches in length, and smaller in diameter than does field corn. An 8-inch ear is a good long one for Golden Bantam, for instance. Country Gentleman is one of the few sweet corn varieties in which large size has been developed.

- 3 -

Both in field corn and in sweet corn the slenderness of the ear tells nothing as to the kernel. The slender ear may carry just as much kernel as a large coarse ear.

Ear worm is a pest to both types of corn. Worm injury is not serious from the viewpoint of the buyer, when it is confined to the tips, for there the damaged parts can be cut out with little waste. When the injured parts occur along the side of the ear they are more objectionable.

Dietetically, sweet corn's claim to a place on American tables is based chiefly upon its carbohydrate-phosphorus content. Very young green corn is about 15 percent carbohydrate--which places it in the same class as grapes and apples. But corn's carbohydrate content increases rapidly as it matures, so that kernels of medium maturity come in the 20 to 25 percent carbohydrate list of fruits and vegetables.

Green sweet corn is rich in phosphorus and carries some vitamin C, about half that of tomatoes, weight for weight.

As to preparing sweet corn, your 100 percent American will invariably call for it on the cob. And Dame Fashion has at last, though somewhat reluctantly, conferred a measure of gentility upon the "dish". Silver skewers can now be bought to thrust into the ends of the cob and thus save fingers from buttery contamination.

Whether or not it is to be served thus--au naturelle--it is most flavorful and tender so cooked. Simmer the corn ears in salted water. Don't boil it rapidly, don't use a large quantity of water, and don't overcook.

When the corn is done, if you wish cut the kernels from the cob, add seasoning--and if you like, some cream. If you are serving it on the cob, it will look more attractive and stay hot longer if you place it on the table covered with a napkin, as you would hot rolls.

- 4 -

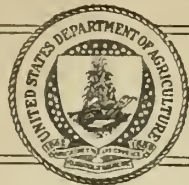
As most housewives know, the time lapse between picking and cooking is one of the most important factors affecting palatability. From the field directly into the pot is ideal. A few hours between picking and cooking is tolerable. But let a whole day elapse and family enthusiasm over the corn will be noticeably lukewarm. Few other foods deteriorate so rapidly after picking.

Sweet corn is delicious used as a filler for tomato halves and then baked.

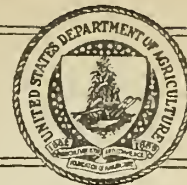
If the sweet corn surplus is to be canned it should be done in the pressure cooker. Hot water bath canning involves too much danger of food poisoning. The housewife who has no pressure cooker would be wise to dry her surplus. Most vegetables are not as palatable dried as canned, but corn properly treated is a delicious product, considered by some as superior to the canned. The U. S. Department of Agriculture has a free bulletin giving in detail methods of drying fruits and vegetables, Bulletin No. 984, and also one on home canning of fruits, vegetables, and meats--No. 1762.

In communities where a cold storage plant has installed locker facilities, the housewife has still another food preservation method available--freezing. Quick freezing of vegetables is a fairly recent development, but can now be considered to have passed the experimental stage. The Bureau of Plant Industry has spent three years in such experimentation.

The freezing process now recommended by this Bureau is as follows: Start the preservation process soon after the corn is picked. Put the cleaned ears in a square of cheesecloth and process them in boiling water for 5 minutes if the corn is to be kept on the cob, otherwise 4 minutes. Plunge into cold water. Pack into containers in a sweetened weak brine--2 percent salt, and 6 1/2 percent sugar. Transfer to cold storage room of 0 degrees F. The short yet adequate heating results in a product which has practically all the characteristics of the fresh corn.



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Information
Press Service



WASHINGTON, D. C.

RELEASE FOR PUBLICATION
JULY 21, 1937 (WEDNESDAY)

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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VEGETABLES FLOURISH;
PROPER STORAGE WILL
KEEP 'EM FRESH, CRISP

- - -

Vegetables - - fore!

Tomatoes, green peppers, onions, beets, lettuce and other greens--almost all the vegetables in the category--are now being shipped north, east, south, west from the various truck centers.

Tomato production in the intermediate group of 10 states is estimated by agricultural statisticians at 5 percent more than that of last year--46 percent above the 5-year average. The pepper crop for the four "second early" states, from which July's shipments come, is reckoned as 40 percent larger than last year's. The cucumber forecast for the four intermediate states is a crop 21 percent greater than last year's. And so it goes.

Quite logically, then, trade reports of grocery stores and marketing centers bear the price words cheap, moderate, and reasonable after the various vegetable items. American families have a wide range of reasonably priced vegetables to select from this summer.

With many vegetables, the sooner they are eaten after they are taken from the garden the better. They are living organisms and Nature's orderly progress



from immaturity to maturity and from maturity to decay cannot be stopped, though refrigeration will somewhat slow it down.

Therefore, buying several day's supplies of such vegetables as peas, corn, and spinach is dubious economy. With vegetables like peppers, tomatoes, and cabbage, however, purchases of larger supplies are often practical.

For all, there is inevitably some time lag between purchasing and eating. And proper care during that interim is necessary if the vegetables are to reach the table in appetizing form. Storage for that interval should be in some cool place. In many households that means in a refrigerator. And what sins are committed against that long suffering piece of kitchen equipment! Sins both of omission and of commission.

In the first place the refrigerator itself is not always kept in tip-top condition. Scrupulous cleanliness is essential if it is to do its work properly. A small spot of spilled food plus the right bacteria or mold spores will speedily develop into a big bad odor and result in contaminated food. Hence all spilled foods should be wiped up at once.

The refrigerator should have at least one bath a week, with sal soda and water--say a tablespoon of the sal soda to four quarts of water. Then the interior should be wiped dry with a clean cloth.

Some women habitually use sudsy hot water for this bath, in a vague way feeling that hot water will disinfect the refrigerator. But there just isn't any way to subject the refrigerator interior to hot enough water long enough to sterilize it. So these conscientious women might just as well use the cold water--with its sal soda--and keep themselves and the refrigerator cool.

For ice refrigerators a strong sal soda water poured down the drain will remove any slime accumulated there.

The rule of cleanliness applies equally to dehydrators. Unless they are cleaned periodically, foods placed therein will spoil.

It's a good idea to wipe off the moisture that collects on the refrigerator walls. Moisture encourages the growth of some microorganisms even at refrigerator temperatures.

In the second place, some women are not informed as to the best way to handle a given vegetable before they put it into the refrigerator, nor as to what part of the refrigerator is the most advantageous spot for it.

The first basic principle of refrigerator care of vegetables is: see that they are clean, crisp, and in good condition before they go into the refrigerator.

If the vegetable is wilted, merely putting it into a cold place will not give it back its freshness. Wilting is due to loss of water content. Therefore to freshen a vegetable, put it into cold water and revive it before you put it into the refrigerator. Of course, the vegetable can be put at once into the refrigerator in the bowl of reviving water for a short time if this is preferable, but it shouldn't be left long. In the mechanical refrigerator, this dish of water would mean added frost on the evaporator.

As soon as the vegetable is crisp again drain off all the excess water and put it into the dehydrator or some other container. Lettuce and such salad greens go best into covered ventilated pans, for they need higher humidity than is wise for most foods.

Here follows a list of vegetables and a recommended after-cleaning, refrigerator technique for each.

Cauliflower. Trim off some outer leaves but leave a few to cut down on evaporation. Place in a covered container in the refrigerator. When space there is at a premium, however, cauliflower can be kept nicely for a short time in a reasonably cool place outside the refrigerator.

- 4 -

Cabbage. If the outer leaves are left on, cabbage keeps quite nicely in any cool place. Put in a mechanical refrigerator, it should be in a covered container because its large leaves encourage rapid evaporation.

Spinach. If necessary, freshen. Put into a covered container. If the dehydrator is full, you can draft into service some other dish--perhaps a one-time lard can.

Parsley. Put into a covered jar by itself.

Cucumber. Like the rest of the salad material, it should be kept cold and ready to serve. The dehydrator is a good place for it.

Carrots. Lay them in the dehydrator where they won't wilt.

Peppers. They can repose on the shelf for a while without wilting, or may hobnob with the dehydrator vegetables.

Peas. Peas should not be shelled until just before cooking time, as they deteriorate in flavor more rapidly divorced from the pod. If shelling must be done some time ahead, however, as for instance in the morning for the evening meal, the ideal treatment is to bring them just to a boil before putting them aside. The next best would be to put them into a covered container such as a quart jar.

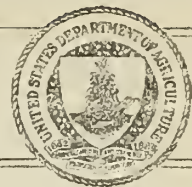
Celery. With the tops removed celery can go into the dehydrator with the other salad vegetables. Uncovered it will wilt rapidly. The tops may be used at once in soups or meat loaf, or dried for the future.

Tomatoes. They should be ripened before being put into the refrigerator, then they may be put in uncovered, as their skin prevents excessively rapid evaporation. If there is room in the dehydrator, however, they may go there.

No vegetable rates the coldest places in the refrigerator. Dairy and poultry products and meat have pre-empted these places of honor. Even when properly placed in the less cold sections, vegetables are sometimes victims of an accident and are frozen. When ice cream is being frozen for the family occasionally a vegetable gets frostbitten. Celery, for instance, may be thus victimized. Such frozen foods will spoil quickly after they thaw out, but there's nothing harmful about them if they are eaten at once.



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Information
Press Service



WASHINGTON, D. C.

RELEASE FOR PUBLICATION
July 28, 1937 (WEDNESDAY)

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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HOW TO SHOP FOR MELONS

- - -

Artists who like to picture Negro children blissful over a dripping slice of red-fleshed watermelon are merely recording an ancient association, for Africa was the land where the watermelon originated. It was cultivated for its refreshing fruit throughout tropical and southern Africa long before the days of recorded history.

But the U. S. American apparently loves his watermelon quite as much as does the African, for in carlot terms only two other foods--potatoes and lettuce, surpass it. More than 30 thousand carlots of this fruit of the vine were shipped last year--and goodness only knows how much more was grown and consumed locally.

Crop estimators in the U.S. Department of Agriculture expect 7 million more watermelons from the early and second early states this year than last year--though that would still be about 5 million less than the average.

Muskmelons cut a much less imposing figure in shipping circles--totaling not much over 12 thousand carlots last year, which put 14 other fruits and vegetables above them. But muskmelons can be grown farther north than watermelons and so there is a greater proportion of them grown locally in the north.

The Bureau of Home Economics reports that muskmelons are an excellent source of vitamin C, a good source of vitamin A, and a fair source of vitamin B.

Watermelon is only a fair source of these vitamins. The poet's comment on beauty—that it is its own excuse for being—may be applied also to the watermelon. A good one is delicious to eat (and certainly not harmful!) and hence its place on our table requires no defense, even though it is not an especially good source of vitamins or minerals. Besides, people eat larger servings of watermelon than of muskmelon, so that the net result isn't so different.

Both watermelons and muskmelons come into the 6 percent carbohydrate class of foods—along with strawberries, blackberries, and dandelion greens. So they are not high calorie foods.

As inspectors are reporting very uneven quality in this summer's watermelons, some buying tips may prove helpful to shoppers. None of the melon family are easy for the inexperienced to shop for, but a watermelon is harder to judge than is the other melon group.

That old test "When you thump it and it goes 'pink' it's green; when it sounds out a dull 'punk' it's ripe" isn't conclusive. All the "punk" reveals is that the melon thus saluted is not immature. It may be overripe, however, and it may also have White Heart, that streak of tasteless hard white, lengthwise through the flesh.

Another favorable indication is a yellowish color on the lower side. Ripe melons of good quality are usually firm, symmetrical in shape, fresh looking, with a bloom on the surface of the rind. Most dealers will obligingly cut a plug out of a melon for a prospective buyer, and that plug, if big enough, will reveal any lurking defects except White Heart. Buying half a melon is, of course, safest of all. Only eating will reveal the degree of sweetness, for that quality is dependent on variety—and variation within a given variety is almost infinite.

Farmers tend to grow their melons from their own seed, so that they often develop special strains. A Tom Watson type of melon in one locality may not taste much like that of another section.

Muskmelons, or cantaloupes as they are widely called, are easier to shop for. For one thing the stem scar is rather significant. If the stem has come off leaving a smooth, sunken, well calloused scar the melon was vine ripened and hence is likely to be well flavored--that is, if it isn't overripe. If the ground color of the rind, beneath the surface netting, is of a strong yellow color, the melon is likely to be overripe.

If half of the scar is rough, and perhaps there is some of the stem still on, the muskmelon was not ripe when it was picked and hence may not be quite as well flavored.

Some shoppers test for ripeness by pressing a muskmelon on the blossom end. But if too many other shoppers have previously so tested this same melon, it will have become soft there regardless of its stage of maturity.

In a high quality muskmelon, the outer netting stands out in rather bold relief, coarse and grayish in color; whereas the ground color has lost its dark green hue and has changed to a lighter shade of green, with a grayish or a yellowish tinge.

Odor is one of the surest tests for ripeness. When a muskmelon's full flavor is developed, the aroma advertises it most energetically! Casabas, honeyballs, honeydews may be successfully ripened off the vine, so stem scar is here a less reliable guide to quality. The following are clues to their ripeness and quality:

Casaba: no aroma, yellow cast to rind, softening of blossom end.

Honeyball: distinct yet fine aroma, color varying from whitish green or gray to a light yellow, no hardness.

Honeydew: yellowish, not whitish green, blossom end yielding to pressure.

As to ways of serving the various types of muskmelons, the most satisfactory form is "in the raw." If you have an eye to color and line try this combination for your fruit course: a pretty plate, a quarter slice of yellow fleshed melon, and gracefully draped across one end of the melon a small spray of seedless green grapes. Of course watermelon and muskmelon balls with a sprig of mint topping them is a dish often seen and is always pretty as well as palatable.

Putting chopped ice into a half melon so as to chill it is a practise shuddered at by gourmets. The ice melts, fills the cavity with water, and adversely affects the flavor of the melon. If it is too odorous to be chilled in the refrigerator, the next best practise is to set the melon half into a bowl of chipped ice.

Watermelon, too, is best eaten raw. The rind, however, does make good pickles. Watermelon, once cooked, loses its characteristic flavor, so that whatever palatability preserves and pickles have must be contributed by added ingredients: for the preserves, lemon and sugar; for the pickles, vinegar, sugar, and spices. Immature muskmelons are sometimes made into pickles. The results are not particularly interesting, however, though a farmer's wife might consider using part of an unmarketable surplus thus.

By the first of August the intermediate cantaloupe shipping states--Maryland, Indiana, Delaware, Washington, and New Mexico--will have begun to harvest their crop. Colorado and New Jersey melons will swell the tide by the middle of the month, followed by Michigan.

The weather will determine the quality of the muskmelons we get. If there are heavy rains just before picking time the quality is inevitably lowered, for muskmelons need dry days at the last to develop the best flavor. There are literally hundreds of varieties of cantaloupes, each with its characteristic texture, color, sugar content, and flavor.

Honeydew melons should be on the market for two months yet.

Watermelons are now past the peak of their shipping period, the "second-early" ^{stage} group of states having about finished off their crop. The earliest of the late shippers will have started their shipments by the first of August. And mid-August will see the first of the local supplies in the northern states. Watermelon addicts can count upon available supplies until late fall.

